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THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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The English Classical Association held a general meeting at Birmingham on October 8-10, 1908, which is likely to prove an epoch-making meeting in the history of classical teaching in England.

This Association corresponds probably more to the American Philological Association than to any of the less national bodies which we have in this country, but the program of the meeting shows a closer relationship in its intent to such associations as The Classical Association of the Atlantic States and The Classical Association of the Middle West and South. The number of papers, judging from our own meetings, is very small, and the interest of the papers is as broad as the love of classical literature.

At this meeting the papers were the following: Demonstration of the principles of Greek lyrical rhythms, by the Rev. Professor Henry Browne; Address by Professor Mackail, How Homer came into Hellas; Paper by Professor Sonnenschein, The Unity of the Latin Subjunctive; Presidential Address by the Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith; Address by Professor Waldstein on Herculaneum, illustrated by lantern slides. In addition there was a report of the committee on the Pronunciation of Greek and of the Curricula committee, a reception by the Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor of Birmingham and a performance of the Hippolytus of Euripides, in Dr. Gilbert Murray's translation, by Miss Horniman's company.

The meeting of the Association brings out a very important difference between the attitude towards the Classics in England and that in this country. The President of the Association last year was the Premier of England, and his address appears in another column. The President for the current year is Lord Cromer; the reception was given by the Lord Mayor of the city, and on the platform were men of not merely national but international reputation in various departments of research other than Classics. If anybody were to suggest the propriety of making Secretary Root President of the American Philological Association I imagine the suggestion would provoke a smile in this country.

But what I wish to comment on particularly is the report of the committee on the pronunciation of Greek, which was adopted. Two years ago the committee on the pronunciation of Latin recommended the use of the Roman pronunciation of Latin, and

while no doubt due regard was paid to Professor Bennett's lamentations in *The Teaching of Latin*, issued in 1901, the report seems to have been wholeheartedly accepted and, most surprising of all, to have been adopted by the English schools with a unanimity that should make us green with envy. Less than five per cent. of the English schools are reported as not having adopted this pronunciation within two years. The present report of the committee on the pronunciation of Greek is of the same character. It recommended the ancient Greek pronunciation so far as we know it. It admits, however, that there are some doubtful points, and that a compromise is quite admissible in regard to the pronunciation of η , ω and ϵ . It recommends but does not insist upon accentuation according to the Greek accents with a pitch and not a stress prominence. The aspirates are equated with *f*, *th* (in *thin*) and German *ch*, although teachers are left free to pronounce them as *k*, *t*, *p* followed by strong breath. An addendum to the aspirates treats the pronunciation of aspirates in Latin, and suggests that *th* be pronounced as in 'theater', *ph* as in 'Philip', *ch* as German *ch* in 'noch' or the Scotch *ch* in 'loch', though here, too, the committee would prefer the pronunciation as true aspirates.

There is little doubt that this pronunciation will be adopted into English schools as wholeheartedly as the Latin pronunciation, and thus England will take its place with America on the side of the most exact pronunciation of the classical tongues that our investigations will warrant.

A recent editorial in the *Evening Post* makes the mistake of saying that England has adopted the Continental pronunciation of Latin. Of course, the Continental pronunciation in Germany, France and Italy is the pronunciation of German, French and Italian, and not the Roman or ancient Greek. This, however, is not a serious divergence, because practically it applies only to the soft consonants. The writer in the *Evening Post* is both regretful and cheerful over the action of the English Association and the English schools in the matter of Latin; regretful because he feels that the possibility of using Latin quotations in English speeches is thereby the more curtailed: we shall not be able, he says, to have again such puns as *fuimus Tores*, an objection which seems to me to be hardly justified. The time when quotations from Vergil or Horace were a nec-

essary part of every English parliamentary speech has passed. A large proportion of the House is made up now of Philistines, men who have never seen the inside of one of the great schools, or of one of the great universities. The Labor member, the Socialist, the adherent of this or that fad is one to whom a classical quotation would not be effective or even intelligible. The appeal of the Classics is to a different audience nowadays.

On the other hand, the writer in the Evening Post thinks that perhaps this new English pronunciation is a step in the direction of a world language to which Arcadius Avellanus so vigorously urged us (see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*, 2. 57). This likewise seems to me to be an interesting suggestion, but hardly important, because no universal language can now be imposed upon the world; at any rate, such is the teaching of history, and unless I am much mistaken, national differences will always conspire to prevent any such movement. Latin, if adopted, would have to have its vocabulary very largely increased, and while that would not be difficult, it would still make the language for all practical purposes an artificial one. However, the suggestion remains a pleasing one, and we classicists would be glad to have it attain a tangible result.

G. L.

MR. ASQUITH ON CLASSICAL CULTURE¹

The Right Hon. H. H. Asquith, M.P., delivered his address as president of the association at the Town Hall last night, when there was a large and distinguished audience. Among those supporting the Prime Minister on the platform were the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress, the Bishop of Birmingham, Sir Oliver Lodge, Lady Lodge, Mrs. Chamberlain, Miss Chamberlain, The Right Hon. Jesse Collins, M.P., Mr. S. H. Butcher, M.P., Alderman Beale, Mrs. Beale, Mrs. Verrall, Miss Daniel, Professors Conway, Robinson, Ellis, Mackail, Postgate, Sonnenschein, Flamstead, Walters, and Charles Waldstein, Dr. Gilbert Murray, Messrs. E Harrison, R. Cary Gibson, C. A. Vince, etc.

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Mr. Asquith, who was accorded an enthusiastic greeting, said:

That it is my privilege as president for the year of the Classical Association to deliver my address to its members assembled in the Town Hall of Birmingham may be regarded, I think, as a striking illustration of the interdependence in this country of culture and practice. Birmingham, among all English towns, is perhaps the one most associated in popular thought and speech with the strenuous interests of business and politics. I, myself, for a long time past have been compelled to spend my

waking hours—if I may use an ancient phrase without offence—*non in Platonis republica sed in Romuli faece*. But Birmingham has set up a University—a University with a faculty of Arts, and a Professor of Greek and Latin in the person of Dr. Sonnenschein, who has been a pioneer of useful experiments in the art of teaching the ancient languages and has done as much as any one to organise and develop the work of the Classical Association. And although, when I remember that I am in the chair which was occupied last year by Dr. Butcher, I am painfully sensible that one who is not even worthy to be called a Scribe has stolen into Moses's seat, yet I can honestly say that I have never wavered in my allegiance to the great writers of antiquity, or ceased to take a lively interest in the progress of criticism and discovery which is every year throwing light on their meaning, and laying deeper and broader the foundations of their imperishable fame.

The Classical Association has a double side to its activities. It seeks to examine and improve our English methods of studying and teaching the Classics. It seeks also to coordinate and bring together the ever accumulating results of the labours of British and foreign scholars. Under the first head it has already, in the course of two years, brought about a radical change which, both in the magnitude of its scale and the rapidity of its execution, may well excite the envious admiration of iconoclasts and revolutionaries in other walks of life. The reformed scheme of Latin pronunciation has been adopted and is in practical use in our Universities, and in most, if not all, of our public schools. It was recommended for use in secondary schools by the Board of Education in a circular issued in February, 1907, which, however, left it open to the schools to retain, if they pleased, the traditional English pronunciation. It will be interesting to you to know the results, the details of which will be set out in the forthcoming report of the Board. Broadly speaking, it may be said that the use of the reformed pronunciation has become normal in grant-earning schools. Returns have been received from 577 schools in which Latin is taught. Of these no less than 550 use the reformed pronunciation. In 24 out of the 550 the scheme of the Association has been adopted with modifications of one kind or another, those most commonly made being—(1) the distinction between *u*, the vowel, and *v*, the consonant, and (2) the retention of the traditional English consonantal sounds; as, for instance, the soft *c* and *g* before the vowels *e* and *i*. You have thus, in effect, in the course of two years made a clean sweep of a system of mispronunciation which has prevailed in this country for more than three centuries, and which has done not a little to isolate English scholarship. Encouraged by this success, the

¹ From the *BIRMINGHAM POST* of October 10, 1908.